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A Victim of
The C.I.A.

By Richard M. Stephenson

NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.—In August, Adm. Stansfield Turner, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, testified before a Congressional committee that the C.I.A. has covertly sponsored research conducted by some 80 institutions, including 44 colleges and universities. This has been widely reported and continues to occasion concern and speculation as to who and what was involved.

Disclaimers of one sort or another already have been made by some colleges and universities and some individuals engaged in research projects.

In informing institutions that they had received covertly funded grants, the C.I.A. has said that the source may not have been known to the recipients and that "most" of the research did not involve projects designed to study "materials and methods useful in altering human behavior" (against which serious charges have been made and reported), but "only far less controversial investigations into aspects of human behavior and its determinants." However, all names of persons and organizations are deleted on any documents requested by those informed.

As one who some 20 years ago received through my university such funds, I, too, have said that I did not know of the C.I.A. funding, that the research was entirely undirected by this source, and that the results were unclassified and freely circulated. My university also has denied knowing of the funding and expressed shock and disturbance that it might have engaged unknowingly in C.I.A.-sponsored research.

While there is some personal satisfaction in my being able to give assurance in the case of the university and my professional integrity, the matter cannot be dropped there. It has implications more serious than implied by disclaimers and the knowledge that "most" of the research was "less controversial," if not innocuous.

I first learned of C.I.A. involvement in my research through alert and knowledgeable reporters who tele-

phoned me at my home to inquire about it. Being the last to know and the least knowledgeable was itself an affront. It is compounded by the realization that I was victimized by an agency of my Government in a manner I can only deplore and resent.

I have been placed on the defensive and put into question, not by my actions, but by an agency which saw fit to use an ostensibly legitimate and respected granting organization as a "cover" (the agency's word) for its own purposes. In the same way, my university has been compromised and, by extension, my profession.

But even those considerations are secondary to more serious concerns. My research involved extended, personal interviews of refugees from the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Since I did not know about the C.I.A., the subjects of my research did not know, or so I assume. Thus, I was caused to violate a cardinal principle of research by unwittingly misrepresenting myself to my respondents. They had the right to know and to grant or refuse an interview as they saw fit.

Still more serious was the real or potential violation of the respondents' anonymity and the confidentiality governing an interview situation. The interviews in which I participated were coded by number to insure anonymity. However, since they were part of a larger study involving a wide range of other data, it was necessary to have a list of names at one center in order to collate the various parts of the study. I do not know if agents of the C.I.A. had access to these files or, if they did, to what use they might put

the information. I do know now that without my intent or knowledge the subjects of my research were placed in varying degrees of potential jeopardy. Since some of the people interviewed played sensitive roles in the Hungarian uprising, or mentioned and knew persons still in Hungary, this possible violation of confidence cannot be taken lightly.

Furthermore, since respondents frequently discussed personal feelings and experiences, they were exposed to the possibility of disclosure that at least might be embarrassing, particularly since they would likely settle in the vicinity and there is a substantial and long-standing Hungarian community near the site of the research.

No doubt other C.I.A. secretly funded studies bear these same or similar burdens. Despite the fact that recipients of funds were deliberately misled as to their source, and the nature of the research was professionally legitimate, the burden is there and it cannot be ignored.

Scholars, the human subjects of their research, and the public at large all have a stake in the matter. Suspicion and distrust can only hamper and finally destroy legitimate and useful study. When they are directed against agents of one's own Government, the consequences are even more serious.

Deliberate deception and misrepresentation are legally proscribed and morally condemned in most civilized human relationships. Where they are not, only overriding concern or urgent necessity may permit them, and provisions are made to give some assurance that such is the case. None of these conditions obtained in the situation described here and very likely in most others. One can only hope that Congressional investigations now under way will result in legislative or other controls that will give assurance that this does not happen again.

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